

7 Gold Newsletter

Hello Parents and Guardians of 7 Gold,

We hope this newsletter finds you well and your student happily adjusting to 7 Gold and Oak middle school. This year, the team will be sending periodic updates about what is going on in team classes and reminders. In addition to these newsletters, please continue to check Schoology for updates/assignments and SeeSaw to view your child's digital journal.

Sincerely,
7 Gold Team Teachers

Math

In Math, we started the school year with reviewing fractions. In the second week of school, we started with our first unit "Samples and Population". The students learned about various elements of data analysis (mean, median, range, IQR), graphic representations used in data analysis (dot plots, double bar graph) and defined population, samples and different types of sampling plans. They applied their data analysis knowledge in researching the assigned countries for the interdisciplinary Heifer project. The students researched the data for the causes of hunger – poverty/ unemployment, undernourishment, healthcare/ life expectancy and literacy rates in each country and found how the cause changed over the span of 5-10 years. They then compared the most current statistics of their country, with the USA in each of the four categories. After researching all the data, the students created keynotes/ Google slides showing their findings and calculated mean, median, range and IQR and represented their data with dot plots and double bar graphs.

We will start working on positive and negative numbers in our next unit "Accentuate the Negative".

Social Studies

In Social Studies, our students have been creating multiple outstanding projects. A major focus of the class is on current events. In the first week of class, each student chose a different current event to research. They then wrote, directed, starred in, and edited their own current events video to be shared with their classmates over the coming weeks. These entertaining and informative videos teach our students about the important issues that are

happening in our world, and often lead to thought-provoking discussions. Through this engaging project, our students develop self-confidence, fair-mindedness, attention to facts, as well as useful (and fun!) video creation skills.

The other major focus of Social Studies is addressing the global issue of World Hunger. After attending the field trip to Heifer Farm on September 19, our students have been collaborating in small groups to discover the causes of hunger in different regions of the world, brainstorm solutions on how to reduce hunger, and create posters and pamphlets to present their unique action plan to the class. We have emphasized the importance of teamwork, as well as approaching difficult issues with a mindset that these are problems to be solved with positive, constructive effort. There will be an option for students to display their finished projects at Heifer in early December!

English Language Arts

In ELA we started off the year with a study of Nonfiction. We read, identified examples of, and talked about the purpose of different text structures and text features (elements of a nonfiction piece that help the reader better navigate and understand the text). After refreshing on close reading strategies and the groundwork that's required for deriving meaning from nonfiction writing, we translated this to our integrated, team-wide Heifer project. The essential questions of this project included: why are children's books effective teaching tools and how can a multi-genre piece of writing, the combination of Fiction and Nonfiction, be used to raise awareness about world hunger issues being studied in Social studies? We looked at *The Giving Tree*, a childhood classic, and discussed why this book is a valuable read at any age, dissected children's books from the "countries" we visited at Heifer, and ultimately are creating storybooks of our own that blend Fiction and Nonfiction in hopes to raise awareness about the solutions the students came up with for minimizing world hunger in their assigned country. Look for a blog with these stories posted soon!

Coming soon will be our Persuasive unit. This year, in order to hopefully motivate students and encourage higher level writing, I will be adding more "voice and choice" to the unit. Students will get a chance to pitch an idea to our "panel" that they would like to further investigate and write a persuasive editorial on. We will be reviewing persuasive writing strategies learned at Sherwood, and building on those by using and identifying examples of more complex vocabulary, powerful claims, strong topic sentences, and the strategies of Ethos, Pathos, and Logos (the appeals to power, emotion, and facts).

Science:

In Science, we started with some fundamental skills. We looked at what it means to think scientifically, important safety rules, science tools, and the scientific method. The students had their assessment on Friday, September 16, 2016. You should have seen and signed that test. All science assessments and lab reports will be sent home for a parent or guardian signature to help keep the flow of communication between home and school fluid. Additionally, each student signed a safety contract and they were asked to get a parent or guardian signature on that as well.

We followed that unit of study with a special interdisciplinary team project related to the Heifer field trip. In science, the students of the seven gold team worked in groups to research biomes in their assigned country. Ms. Bedard (the media specialist) came to science for several days and taught lessons about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and how to take notes in a program called Noodle Tools. NoodleTools is used in all classes starting in seventh grade and follows the students into the high school; it is used to take notes whenever the students do research. The Noodle Tool notes and the science research packet were due in science on Thursday, September 29, 2016.

The same day that the students passed in their science Heifer research work, they started our unit of study called Living, Non-Living, and Dead. We established clear definitions and started to apply this information to the world around them. They will be creating Keynote presentations showing and telling how we know how to classify a thing as living, non-living or dead. The Keynotes are due on Wednesday, October 5, 2016. We will continue to explore this topic over the next couple of weeks and will then move to our study and use of microscopes.

Essentials ELA

Since the beginning of school, we have been working on a nonfiction unit. Students have been learning how to differentiate between fiction and nonfiction. We have learned about the elements of nonfiction texts and what their purpose is. Students completed a project in which they read historical fiction children's books and identified which parts were based on real facts and which parts were made up. Based on that, they created stories of their own based on real information learned through their Heifer projects. Since then, we have been practicing how to "UNRAVEL", or dissect, news articles as another way of analyzing nonfiction pieces. Students are determining the author's purpose for writing the article, as a way to improve reading comprehension.

In the coming weeks, we will begin a unit on persuasive writing, where students will demonstrate their ability to write with purpose. Students will analyze a topic, and will form their own opinions on it. Based on their stance, they will write a convincing argument with textual evidence to support their claims.

Learning Skills

In Learning Skills, we spend a great deal of time reviewing concepts that are introduced in other classes. The additional exposure and practice allows them to feel more confident about the material. Students have an opportunity to ask questions about classwork or homework that is challenging to them.

We have also worked on note taking strategies, a skill that is essential to all their learning in 7th grade and in the future. Throughout the year, we will practice the different ways to take notes and how to identify what information is important and what is not. In addition to this, we are practicing how to create study guides that will be useful for tests and quizzes.

As the year goes on, we will continue to reinforce skills and strategies to make concepts and homework more manageable, allowing students to feel successful.

Parent Conference Day

Individual Parent conferences will be by appointment only. Everyone else are invited for "Meet and Greet" from 12:30 - 1:30 pm during which time each homeroom will have 15 minutes segments to come and meet each team teacher informally.

Reminders:

7 Gold Bowling - October 14 (2:30 - 4:00 pm)

If Only film - October 18 (During School) [Check the flyer at the bottom]

Parent Conference Day - November 8

SCAPE Presents:



A screening with Producer James Wahlberg,
Executive Director of the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation

October 18, 2016 • 6:30 p.m.

**Oak Middle School
Shrewsbury, MA**

The film will be followed by an interactive discussion about drug use and addiction featuring a panel of local experts.



For more info visit: ifonlymovie.org